



Tamgaly, Kazakhstan



Valley of the Kings, Egypt



Tanum Rock Carvings, Sweden

LCDP Class X Leadership Seminar The Power of Storytelling

**Timi Vann
April 4, 2017**

Cueva de las Manos, Argentina



Newspaper Rock State Historic Monument, USA



Wunnumurra Gorge, Australia



Storytelling is not something we do. Storytelling is who we are.
-- Carmine Gallo

I'm going to read you a short story....

Once upon a time, there was a curious anthropologist who asked a lot of questions and loved hanging around really super smart people doing pretty cool stuff. For some unknown reason people tolerated her curiosity, and they invited her to join them. It seemed fun enough, and so she did.

As far as vocation is concerned, this curious anthropologist had no singular passion. There was no calling. There was nothing specific that made her heart sing.

Over time she simply wandered along and met many more really super smart people doing pretty cool stuff. It is true that not all who wander are lost, and it was indeed fun enough.

One day, after a rather horrendous meeting (okay - it wasn't always fun), this anthropologist met some really cool women doing some very awesome work. She was inspired by them, but also embarrassed by her ignorance. *Who are these women?*

This anthropologist had a problem other than her embarrassing ignorance. She was also full of ideas and she thought they were all pretty good. All of her friends thought she had pretty good ideas too. That is probably why they were friends.

This anthropologist was pretty sure she wasn't the only one who was ignorant about these women who inspired her.

She wanted to know their stories, and she wanted to tell stories about them. So, she started sharing some storytelling ideas with her friends – you know, the ones who thought her ideas were great.

One of her friends thought that these stories should be told in a movie. The problem with like-minded friends is that there is no resistance. So these two thought “*why not?*” and decided they should make a movie. Never mind that neither one was a filmmaker.

Other people thought this was a great idea too – and wanted to be a part of it. Thankfully these people knew what they were doing.

So an idea was born of inspiration and nurtured by a feeling that somehow and somehow this film would all work out.

This anthropologist is me. I am making a film to tell a story about women of the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps. I believe this film will work out – although it isn’t done yet, and I keep blowing deadlines.

I want to share my filmmaking “backstory” with you, which includes some important things I’ve learned along the way...

*Curiosity is a good thing, and maybe following curiosity will make your heart sing
– or at least give a whistle.*

Problems can present opportunities.

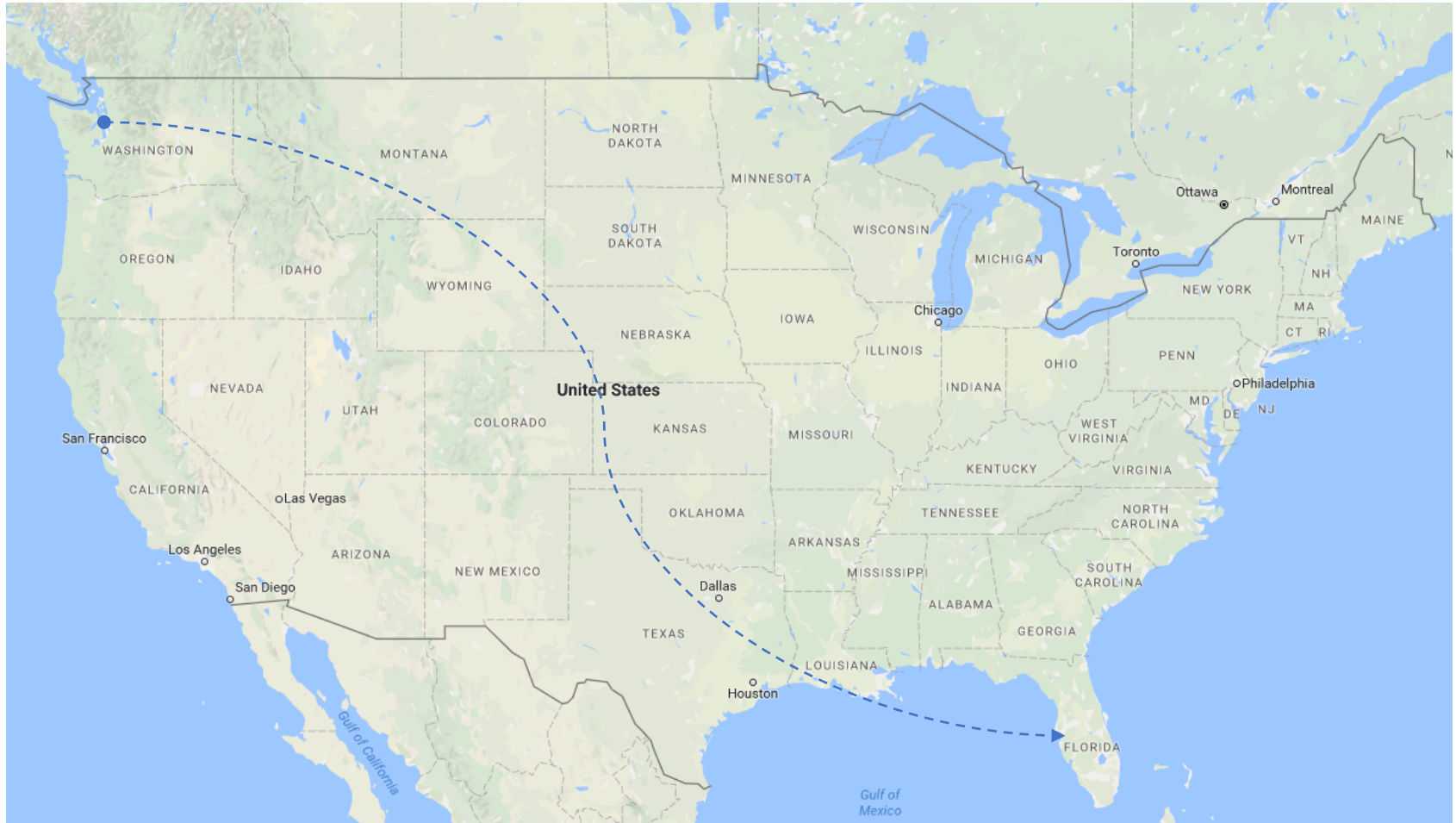
*Tell your lizard brain to go to hell - you can do things you never even dreamed,
although sometimes it might seem more like a nightmare.*

*Choose friends who think you are fabulous and who get you into things that are
way over your head.*

Go and have fun.

Tell your story.

Now I'm Going to Read you the Backstory (November 2015)



I was feeling grumpy about having to go to St. Petersburg for a regional collaboration meeting. I thought it would be a waste of my time, a weird group therapy session, a total train wreck.

It was pretty bad.

Have you ever been in a meeting with no agenda, no tables and a “fishbowl” format?

Yeah, not good.



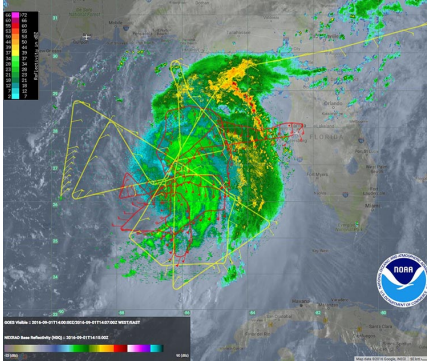
Fishbowl meeting format.

Is this dude asleep?
This was me!

But all was not lost. In between the flip charts, breakout sessions, post it notes and colored dots we took a fieldtrip.

We saw some really cool planes!

I like planes and I like science. I especially like planes that are used for science.



Radar composite of Tropical Storm Hermine September 1, 2016. NOAA hurricane hunter aircraft N43RF.



Here is our classmate Ian.
Hi Ian!



Flight Director Ian Sears on WP-3D Orion. Cool!

I got to hang out with super smart people doing really cool stuff. I felt cool just knowing them.



LCDR Jason Mansour, G-IV Pilot. Cool!



CAPT Harris Halverson, Director AOC & P-3 Pilot. Cool!

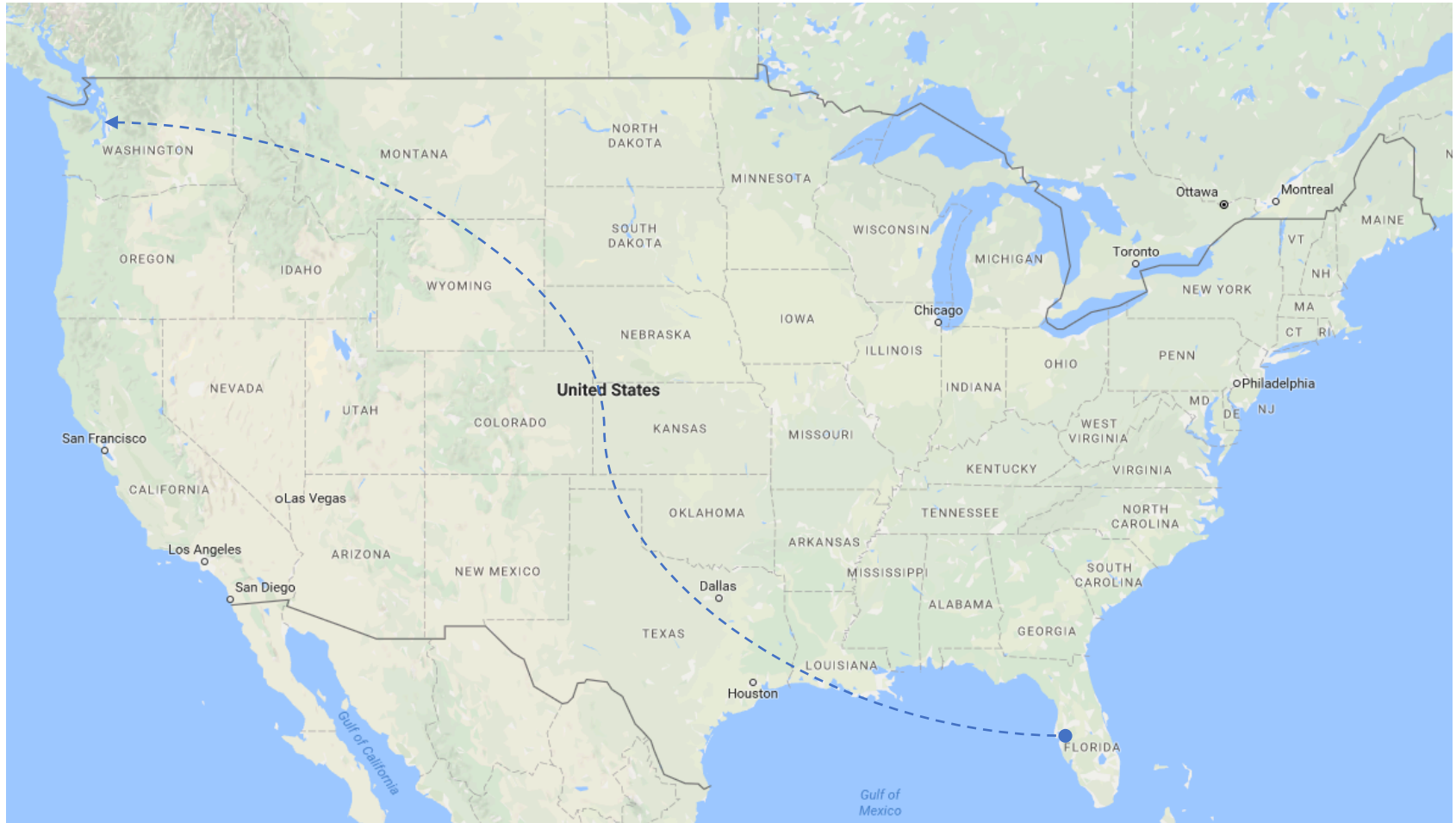
I was inspired - especially by her.



CDR Cathy Martin, P-3 Pilot. Cool!

I flew back to Seattle.

The plane ride was long and the plane was not cool.



I had way too much time to think about how cool it was to visit the Aircraft Operations Center.
I probably also had way too much wine on the flight home.

My mom is also an anthropologist who asks a lot of questions. Sometimes that can be annoying, but sometimes it can be good. Our conversation went something like this:

Mom: *How was your trip?*

Me: *The meeting was awful, but I did get to see some really cool planes and hang out with some really cool women. One is an Admiral and the other is a hurricane hunter. It was cool.*

Mom: *Oh wow – that sounds neat. How many female admirals have there been in the NOAA Corps?*

Me: *I dunno.*

Mom: *How many female pilots are there in the NOAA Corps?*

Me: *I dunno.*

Mom: *How many women serve in the NOAA Corps?*

Me: *I dunno.*

Mom: *Huh.*

Me: *I know – I feel like I should know these things. I mean there has to be a story here, right?*

Mom: *Right.*

So a film idea was born...and it grew...

People were excited and they nurtured the film along. A small production team (me, Crescent Moegling, Bob Schwartz and LCDR Fionna Matheson) took great care to raise it over the last 11 months.



We were all inspired and energized by the talents of these individuals. We felt it was important to document this history.



I flew 17,500 miles in 8 weeks to talk with some amazing people.



Their stories revealed insights about their place in time, their travels and sometimes travails. Their stories also revealed a commitment to service that made me proud to be a part of this organization. I learned a lot from these women (and Admiral Nygren!).



LTJG Shanae Coker



Dr. Kathy Sullivan



CDR Cathy Martin



The production team in Tampa, FL

I made new friends. My admiration of these new friends and my colleagues grew.



The production team in Seattle, WA

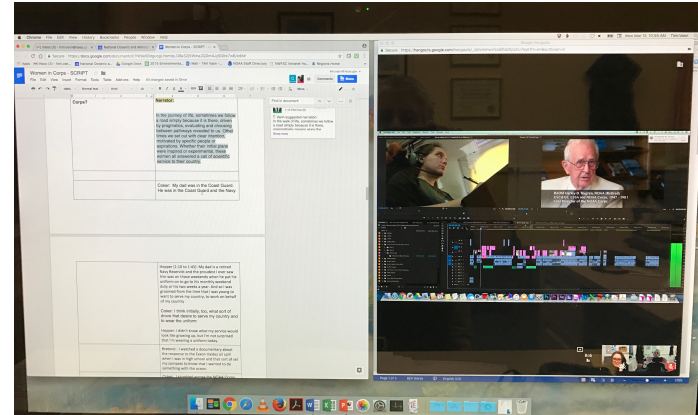
We had fun. This anthropologist thought it was all very cool.



CDR Martin – my film inspiration

Then came the the post-production work. I thought filming was hard, but editing 17 hours of footage into a 30 minute film is even harder. Way harder.

Doing this work with a production team that is distributed across 2,500 miles is even harder! Way, way harder!



Scripting & Editing via Google Hangouts

We thought this would be done in January, then we thought February, then we thought March. Now we are hoping for April. A preview will be shown at the NOAA Corps Anniversary Dinner in May (we promise!). We're hoping for a full roll-out this Fall.

My story about making a film is still being written, but I want to share a preview of our work thus-far.

Rough cut: ***Why do you think it is important to tell stories about women of the NOAA Corps?***



Segment: Who cares what you are v6

<https://youtu.be/m3etvrJgeB4?list=PLPaE6lNwSlboSIMDltVXZoYCCEjFCRRGH>

The full story is to be continued....

DISCUSSION: Why do YOU think it is important for NOAA to tell stories?

Reading 1: Brent Dykes describes data storytelling as an essential data science skill. *“Numbers have an important story to tell. They rely on you to give them a clear and convincing voice.”*

Question: What might the implications of data storytelling be for a public and data rich science agency like NOAA?

Reading 2: Lise Saffran notes that the meaning of any given set of facts is subject to interpretation. *“...while the data may have been generated in your lab, the task of science communication is to convey the significance of those data to the people outside of your lab – an audience that may and often does have an entirely different frame for interpreting the material you present.”*

Question: How might we reach audiences with differing beliefs, assumptions and suspicions?

Reading 3: Peter Guber states *“...great storytelling does not conflict with truth. In the business world and elsewhere, it is always built on the integrity of the story and its teller.”* He describes the four truths of the storyteller: Truth to the Teller; Truth to the Audience; Truth to the Moment; and Truth to the Mission.

Question: How do you see these truths reflected in the stories NOAA tells?

Thank you for listening to my story and for your thoughts on storytelling!